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HENRY WARD BEECHER.

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THE INDWELLING OF CHRIST.

"To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory."—Col. I., 27.

This is one of the letters of the Apostle Paul in which he is kindled to a very lofty inspiration in view of the divinity of his Master, Jesus Christ. In the preceding verses of this chapter, which I read in your hearing as a part of the opening services, he looks upon him in his exhortation as Creator and as Chief in pre-eminent excellence and glory. He speaks of himself as having been made a servant of this Lord and Master that he might proclaim the knowledge of him to the Gentiles. That is to say, stripping off the covering which belongs to this, as a part of the Jewish history, speaking of it in more modern phrase, Paul beheld the Lord Jesus Christ as the true revelation and interpretation of the Godhead. He perceived, also, that this God was God over all; not that he was the national God of the Jews, but that he belonged to the whole human family. There was at that time to him a wonderful inspiration in the liberty and universality of the Gospel, because he had been brought up to suppose that the true God favored chiefly the Jews, and that all the rest of the human race were only as their servants. He declares the riches of the glory of the Master to be the truth that this God was the God of the Gentiles. And then follows the language of our text:

"Which is Christ in you [or Christ as revealed in you] the hope of glory."

There are a great many ways in which we may look upon Christ. We may look upon him—not disdaining outward things—in his relations to the inward, invisible experience of men, and in his relations to the hidden spiritual world, beheld in the present and in the future. It is this last revelation which seems to have kindled the apostle's mind, not here alone, but in many other instances. It was the thought of Christ's inward, invisible, personal relations to the heart of man, to the race, and of his relations to

Sunday Morning, June 9, 1872. Lesson: Col. I. Hymns (Plymouth Collection) Nos. 260, 447, 463.

time and eternity, that kindled in the Apostle the most enthusiastic utterances of his life. And it is impossible that we should come to a knowledge of the true Christ unless we employ the historical method, and become familiar with the portraiture of Christ as contained in history. It is not enough to say that this alone will not save or comfort. It is true that it will not, alone. It is true that one may study the Gospels intellectually, reproducing from them imaginatively in himself a portraiture of Christ that will be transcendently noble, and that yet it shall be a mere imagination, as it were, of history, not vital, not powerful. This is simply an abuse of a right thing. For, if we be uninstructed in regard to the reality, if we cannot go back to the data which history furnishes, how can we form any conception of Christ that shall be vital? The study of the work and of the character of the Lord Jesus Christ is antecedent and auxiliary to a true experience of Christ.

So, too, there is a study of the character of Christ which may be called *the theologic*. Carried to excess it often is; it is much abused; but none the less is there a place for it, and a reason for it. It is a matter of transcendent interest to know whether Christ himself believed that he was divine as one of three, cohering in an invisible and mysterious unity with the Father and with the Spirit. It is important to know what the relations of the revealed God in Christ Jesus were to law and moral administration, and what was the nature of his suffering, and what was the relation of that suffering to the great matter of human salvation—whether it was an influence reflexly upon the mind of God, whether it had some influence upon the mind of the intelligent universe, or whether it had some direct relation to a kind of physical structure of government. These are questions not without interest. Nay, in some sense it may be said that though an individual or a series of individuals may live and thrive in a true piety and in an eminent Christian experience, outside of theology, yet, taking men collectively, the theological views of Christ will largely determine the productiveness of the piety of the church.

Views of the divinity of the Saviour which run low will, averaging them through the ages, be productive of a low tone of spirituality; and the theological views of Christ which range high, and exalt him, will tend, through the ages, to produce the highest types of spirituality. Nevertheless, a man may have the theology of Christ as nearly right as any will have it in this mortal state, and yet not be possessed of Christ. It is antecedent; it is auxiliary; it is collateral. Before Christ can be to us what he was meant to be, there must be something other than either the historical picture,

or the theologically conceived character of Christ. It is quite possible that we should advance beyond the historical method, or the metaphysical and philosophical method, and that we should have what may be called a romantic Christ—a Christ of the imagination.

Men may advance one step beyond. Taking the materials which are afforded by historical investigation, or theological research, they may construct a poetical representation of Christ. They may frame a conception of a being that rules, and may add every element to it which the best part of their nature can contribute. So, in the studio of their own mind, they may be forever painting the beauty and the glory which inheres in the character of such a one as Jesus Christ, This character may be one which shall, at times, excite poetic prayer. It may help devotion. It may have no inconsiderable influence upon the life of men. But it is not yet Christ as he is to be conceived of before he is in us "the hope of glory." The apostle taught, beyond any peradventure, that there is something more than this—namely, that there is a living Christ who may come into living sympathy with us, and who may be so received as to be a part of our own lives, and a part of our innermost experience.

It was this conception of Christ, as a living being, exerting a living force upon living men, and, as it were, mixing with thought, and feeling, and volition, and action, and disposition, and character, and so set home to us that he becomes our Christ—not the Christ of Jerusalem, not the Christ of the heavenly host, not the Christ of universal theology, but a Christ formed out of those materials by which we help to produce in ourselves the sentiment and the experience of Christ in us—it was this conception of Christ that it was meant we should have. It was Christ "in you." It was your Christ, and mine. It was each man's own Christ. It was a Christ personal to each one. It was a Christ, the thought of whom, being framed, built, lived with, becomes colored with our own experience, and is a register of our own life, we writing ourselves in him as he transforms us by his thought and indwelling influence.

This personal Christ, or the Christ of actual personal experience, distinguished from the Christ of history, of theology, or of romanticism, is that of which I shall speak to you this morning.

I. In order that he may be my Christ, in order that I may find all my wants met in him, he must be One in whose hands is the whole sphere in which I live and act. He must be Lord of all the causes which are influencing me; he must be supereminent over all the

influences which surround me; he must know me, and control me; he must know my conditions and control them; he must know the great sphere in which I am, and control it, or else he is not the Christ that is adequate to me. It is not needful, perhaps, in the lower planes of a dull or semi-enlightened experience, that we should have the sense of a supreme deliverer; but no man ever lifts himself up, no man is ever inspired in the higher moods of his nature, no man ever feels the throbs and throes of a coming deliverance, no man ever aspires to nobility, or contests in himself, and strives to release himself from that which is low and base, and reaches toward the higher and the nobler, if he does not feel the need of God. When we are looking down we are our own Gods, and we feel the might of our own nature, the potency of our own will; but from the moment that a man enlarges immensely the conception of manhood, and then strives for it in earnest, and means to be something higher and nobler—from that moment dates the growth of the necessity of supernal influences. If I had no revelation in that matter, if I had no concurrent testimony concerning it, my own experience would tell me that my nature could not go out after that help unless there was something in me that needed it, and something that answered to that need. As when I hunger, my hunger says that there is food; as when my eye was made, that eye said that there was light to match it and to meet it; so in the higher realm of experience, I do know that certain struggles and yearnings, certain mute wants, certain indefinite and indescribable experiences, all point to something higher than I am.

What is it that the vine seeks, day by day, struggling through the leaves, and twining itself upon whatever comes in its way? Is it support? It would be just as well supported if it lay on the ground. Why does the vine go still twining up? It is because it is in love with the light.

Why is it that men's souls twine, and rise, and aspire? Is it instinct? What is instinct, but this: that there is something in the nature of the soul which reaches out after a stimulus which it feels, as the plant grows toward the light which looks upon it and stimulates it? As everything in the vegetable kingdom reaches toward the sun, so the soul reaches toward God. He yearns for us, and we reach out toward him.

Now, if Christ be one that meets my wants and my necessities; if he be the Christ of history which declares that he is Bread, that he is a Staff, that he is a Friend, that he is a Deliverer, that he is a Saviour; if he be all that historically he is declared to be, he must

be supreme over the world, and supreme over its conditions. I accept, therefore, the rapturous declaration of the apostle when he says,

"By him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him: and he is before all things, and by him all things consist."

Take the divinity of Christ. My thought of Jesus is, that he made the whole earth from which I am struggling to get free. And whatever may be the method of human ascent in this world, it is a system which has been organized and instituted and conducted, thus far, by Jesus—by the Saviour of the world; and all the laws that relate to it, all the laws that reflexly have to do with it, are in his hand. He has the control of them. His is the providence which is woven in them and through them. Christ is one who has control of the ages, of the nations, of the terraqueous globe on which the nations tread, of all physical laws, and of all economic laws; and it is he that has created the invisible realm which wraps this world as with a swaddling band, where are other spirits, thrones, powers and dominions. In the hands of this Saviour are both realms. Therefore when I crave deliverance it is not such a craving as I feel when I go to the chemist and ask what is the analysis of my food, and what are the best things for me to eat. It is not such a craving of deliverance as I feel when I go to the optician and ask his advice in regard to my eye which is in trouble. It is not such a craving for relief as I feel when I go to my physician and get him to prescribe for my bodily aliments. No man who is limited by specialties can give me the help that I need. Nothing short of one who is Lord over all, visible and invisible, is adequate to my want.

My conception of Christ is, that he is *mine*: not mine in any sense which appropriates him to me alone; but mine as really and truly as though I were the only human being in the universe. My father was absolutely mine, although my next younger brother could say the same thing, and though every brother and sister could say the same thing. I had the whole of him, and each of my brothers and sisters had the whole of him. And I have the whole of my God. The God of all the heaven, and the God of the whole earth, and of time, and of physical law, and its sequence, and of all invisible laws, and their sequences—he is my God.

II. Next, in order to meet the exigency of my nature and of my experience, not only have I a Christ in whose hand is the whole sphere of earthly administration, but one who loves me. I cannot

approach any other God. I cannot be conditioned. The dull and clumsy-minded may possibly approach with conditions, but I am neither dull nor clumsy-minded. My ideal goes faster than any possible realization. Do you tell me that God will accept me upon conditions? Instantly the attempt at realization comes short. There is an infinite disparity between the condition and my potency. There might as well have been no condition at all. Do you say that he will accept me when I am good? I never shall be good. Do you tell me that he will accept me when I fulfill his law? I never shall fulfill his law. Do you say that he will accept me when I disinterestedly love him? I never shall. The more I look into myself, the more I seem to be a mere fragment of a thing, inchoate, rude, unperfected, unsymmetrical, with enough spots to begin at, but few accomplishments; with rude germs, some sown in good soil, and some in poor. Here I am full of aspiration, and yearning, and all manner of mingling influences, which sometimes whirl as clouds, and at other times lie calm and serene as in tranquil summer days. There is a consciousness of immense potency to come; but there is no sense of perfection, or attainment. or symmetry, or loveableness. When I look in at myself, and ask, "What is there that God can love?" I do not know. There is little that I myself can love. There is very little in me that I could love if I saw it in anybody else. And yet, it is indispensable to me that somebody should love me. I cannot live without love. It is the heat of the universe. Philosophers tell us that without heat the universe would die. And love in the moral universe is what heat is in the natural world. It is the great germinating power. It is the ripening influence. It is the power by which all things are brought steadily up from lower to higher forms. And it is necessary for me to believe that Jesus Christ loves me. But if you tell me that he loves me because I am so good, it is a lie. I am not good. Yet he loves me. If you tell me it is because I am going to be so good, it is false. That cannot be it. Why does he love me?

Oh, tell me, if you can, why it is that the mother loves such a little thing as she does? Look at it. It does not know how to look at anything. It sprawls its little mouth. It straggles its little hands here and there. It is a hardly shapen little piece of flesh. But oh, how the mother loves it! It is covered with kisses, that cannot kiss again. It is pressed to her bosom, that does not know even how to touch her bosom voluntarily. It is the mere possibility of something in the future; but at present, what is it? It is apparently one of the most insignificant of creatures; and yet what a

tide of love goes out toward it! Oh, what brightness is in the mother's eye! Oh, what gentleness! Is there anything in this world that brings out the beauty of womanhood so much as the spectacle of a great heart pouring itself out on that little something? It is the richness of her own soul that is loving it. It is her nature. Love is there by constitution. It pours itself out on the helpless child. And is that all? Not only does it love, but it teaches the child to be lovely. The child's nursery is the mother's heart. The cradle in which every virtue and grace is rocked early is a mother's love. She makes the child lovely by loving, by waiting, and by training.

I am as a lump of clay. What can the clay do of itself? Put it upon the potter's wheel, and set it in swift revolution, and lay upon it a skillful hand, and see how the rude clay begins to take on form. See how it begins to show the most exquisite lines of the old vases. See how, by the touch of the molding hand, it is brought to something that it is not of itself.

My God is a God who loves out of his own nature, and not on conditions. It is not needful that I should be beautiful in order that he shall love me. It is not needful that I should be patient in order that he shall love me. He loves me because of himself. We are saved by grace. We are redeemed by goodness. Our salvation does not depend upon what we are, but upon what God is. He saves us by the long suffering patience of his love. And it is this sense of the God regent in heaven, who rules throughout nature, who takes care of providence itself, who *is* providence, and who has a nature so royal that it pours love abroad incessantly, as the sun does light, and of whom it is said,

"He maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust—"

it is this sense of One who is a God of universal beneficence on account of the nature which he has in himself, and the nature that draws men toward him—this it is that I need. Give me this conception of God, and I have something that I can lean on; something that I covet; something that is worth believing. The better you make him, the better it is for me. Who cares how large the surplus is, when dividends are going to be declared. If you are one of the stockholders, the bigger the pile, the better you like it. Make God as good, as powerful, as glorious as you please; lift him up and up, till your very reason faints and can follow no longer; for he is mine. All the bounty that you put on him, all the crowns that you place upon his head, all the power that you give to his scepter, adds to the worth of that which belongs to me. Every conception

which magnifies the grandeur and dignity of God augments the glory of my inheritance. He is my God; and what child was ever unwilling that his father should be honorable or powerful or rich?

It is necessary, further, not only that there should be to me the thought of this Christ as the reigning God of actual affairs, of providence, and so of history, and that he should be a being whose nature is transcendent in love, but that there should be more than that. He should be Christ *in me*. He should be a being whose direct and personal sympathy I recognize, and who is developing in me the superior qualities of spiritual elements. It is quite in vain for the apple that is hanging on the bough to-day to rejoice in all the glory of summer, unless the summer is working something of itself in the fruit. It is. There is the balm of the summer day; but that balm is not alone what you recognize. It comforts a million roots in the lawn before your house. The summer is not merely the warm air which you are cognizant of. The cricket knows it. The grasshopper knows it. The moss knows it. The very stones, that grow warm and stimulate the moss which covers them, know it. Ten thousand little delicate insects know it. All blossoms know it. The leaves know it. The fruits know it. The summer is working silently but universally. It is in everything. It fills everything with its own qualities. It develops all things.

And so, not only must my God be the Lord of heaven and the Governor of the earth, but his personal relations to me must be such that he shall be in me all the time, and must be working specially within me.

This matter is likened, in the Bible, to hospitality.

"I stand at the door and knock; if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me."

God comes to men's souls; he comes to the soul-house of men; he enters there; he holds communion with them. It is as if a benefactor entered into a dwelling to bring joy, treasure, relief—whatever gift he might please to bestow. Christ comes to me, transforming all that is visible and all that is invisible in me. I do not believe that God is a person who sits in one place as a man's body does. I stand here in my body; but that is not me. My thoughts are running quickly to and fro. They stretch from the rising of the sun to the going down of the same. I am where my thoughts are, and where my affections are. I am conscious that my inner manhood spreads abroad, and is already superior to time and space. And my God is not a person in such a sense that he is fixed. Everywhere the affluent mind of God pervades the universe. He enters into my mind. He touches the springs

of life and being in me. And it is the quality of the divine indwelling to develop in men their superior nature—not their animal; to give authority and power to their faculties—love, and hope, and faith, and conscience, and the moral sense; to set them free from the dominion of the appetites and passions. I believe there is such a thing as an indwelling God. In other words, I believe there is such a thing as the direct sympathetic action of the divine mind on certain parts of our mind.

Let a little child be in the room with its slate, making figures and let that child, if it be musically inclined, hear the mother sing in a low tone, and its thoughts begin to sing the tune that the mother is singing,—involuntarily. Let the child sit musing, and let the mother begin to tell some interesting story, and she does not need to say to the child, "Now, listen!" It will listen in spite of itself. If you sigh in the presence of another man, he will be likely to sigh too. If you sing, he will feel sing. If you reason, he will think reason. If you laugh, he will smile. If you cry, the shadow falls on him. You reflect your mood on those who are around about you. And God's mind has power upon the minds of those who are in communion with him. If the heart be open, and the moral nature be sensitive, God acts upon the thought and feeling, so that you are guided by him. And I fain would believe that there is a loving Christ who dwells in me, and takes care of all the conditions that affect me, and fills me with a divine stimulus and influence.

It is not the irresistible grace of God, it is the nursing care, it is the steady, constant influence of the divine mind, borne in on my mind, that fills up somewhat the measure of the apostolic thought, and the conception of Christ in you. This indwelling of Christ, this spiritual contact of his nature with the super-sensuous nature of man—this it is that transforms the visible sphere. It gives life a perspective, it adds to the sense of being, to have a vision of coming immortality—to have a consciousness of "Christ in you the hope of glory." That which every man needs more than anything else is to see that the experiences which are going on in the world around him, and which are reflected in him, are a part of that great life which, beginning here, runs on and completes itself only in the life that is to come. If in this life only we had hope, we should be of all men most miserable.

I know it has been said that morality has such fruit that it would be worth while to be moral if we lived but a hundred or fifty years; and that is true in some sense. But, considering all the conditions of strife, all the exigencies of conflict, all the rivalries of men

in the universal mixture of human affairs, no man can well bring to bear such things as a potential motive, and say that they are sufficient. If, however, a man feels that though his life begins here, it runs beyond the present; if he feels that there is an unharnessed, emancipated life in the future; if he trains himself to feel that his experience is to be measured, not by its relations to this hour, and this day, and this year, but by its relations to his whole sphere of existence, it will make all the difference in the world.

If I were to find a man fastening up the windows of my house, where I am to live year after year, so that I could get neither air nor light, it would be an inconvenience to me; but if I were not expecting to stay there, I should not care so very much.

When I was on my way from Liverpool to Halifax, and the steward came and said that he must fasten up the bull's-light to keep the water out, and screwed up the window so that where there was no air before, there was still less afterward, I did not care. I was like a water-logged stick in my berth, anyhow; and I looked up, and said, "Well, it will make no difference. Ten days of annihilation. On shore pretty soon. Don't care what air I have, or what anything else."

If my present life is all that I have; if the horizon is to me the utmost line of travel; if the days that I am wearing out now are all the days that are to be mine, it makes a great deal of difference what my conditions are. I insist on good things here, if there is nothing but this world. If there is no existence beyond the present life, I will seek the utmost enjoyment here. If I am to die when I am through with the material globe, I will exert all my strength to secure the best fruits which physical life affords. If I am to cease to exist with the going down of my mortal sun, then this world must yield something or other to me, and something or other I will have out of it. And if a stronger man than I am throws me down, it is a woe. If other men know how to suck out joy and I do not, or if when I go to the flowers the honey is gone, that is a misery and a mischief.

But oh! tell me that I am beloved; that on the bosom of love I shall dwell above the reach of time and chance; that I am to live as long as God lives; that, dropping these conditions, I am to rise to a higher spiritual form; that I am to have better companionship; that I am to have a clearer knowledge of my God; that I am to be among the first-born of the saints in heaven—tell me these things, and every part of my life is transformed. Now, what if I am poor? I can afford to be poor. What if I am sick? I can afford to be sick, and wait for my eternal health. What if I am un-

known here? My name is written in the Book of Life. What if I am disconsolate? There is music sounding in which I shall take part. What if I am obscured, persecuted, cast out, hated here? Sovereign is the eternal God, and he shall lift up the humble, and exalt them by his right hand of power. And I turn to death itself and say, "Where is thy sting?" What if death takes away our loved ones? They are to live again out of the turmoil and trouble of this life, in a sphere where neither darkness, nor sickness, nor poverty can come, but where there shall be riches, and health, and light forever more.

"I know," said the apostle, "how to abound and how to suffer lack;" and so it is with every man who has a real vivid belief in God, and whose Christ is in him day by day, interpreting to him the eternal glory. *Christ in you the hope of glory*—that is the Christ which you want. That is the Christ which every struggling soul needs. That is the Christ that I preach to you.

Men and brethren, I am not indifferent to your views in respect to technical theology. I do not undertake to say that your religious opinions have no validity. I do not say that all knowledge of Christ must consist in this personal experience. But I do say that if you are without this experience you discrown yourself, and disinherit yourself of those blessings by which you were to have been made rich kings and priests unto God.

You have your own sorrows; but Christ has been for you "a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief." You have your own conflict with pride; but you are led by One who has been tempted in all points as you are, yet without sin. You have your own mortifications and limitations and hindrances. You are brave and proud; courage and pride lift themselves up in you in vain; they are chained down; nevertheless you have One who has come to open the prison door, and to break the chain, and to give life and liberty to the imprisoned spirit. You have in Jesus Christ that patience without which no one could get along with you. He has patience with you, if no one else has. He has forgiving love. He has cleansing power. His life, his nature, his influence, touch humanity in every part. He comforts those who would despair without divine comfort. He enlightens those who sit in darkness.

I preach that Christ to you who is the very God that rules the heaven and the earth; who loves you, and loves you for your good, and not because you are so good; who nourishes you; who would fain lift you in his arms above the trouble of life; who would shape you by what you enjoy and suffer, so that one day you shall walk in his presence, with all the port and dignity of the sons of God. I

preach to you immortality. I preach to you a renewed and ennobled manhood. I preach to you the love of God in Christ Jesus as the all-fashioning influence by which you are to be brought to that manhood and that immortality.

Do riches suffice? Is pleasure enough? Does your cup run over? Can you look around and say, "I have no need of God: I am strong enough in virtue and in good; I have more than heart could wish"? Have you love enough? Are you not met day by day with care and with sorrows? Day by day does your soul not feel the guilt of sin? Do you feel no burden of evil? Do you long to be better, and never strive with bitter disappointment? Is there that in you which claims and hungers for immortality? Do you long to be stronger and nobler in all that is transcendent? For you there is a Saviour—Jesus Christ. He is for all, without exception. It needs only that you should take him.

If for every man in Brooklyn there was sent to the Post Office here a veritable document announcing that there had been left a hundred thousand dollars for him, every one of you would receive that hundred thousand dollars who should go and draw the document and use it. But though there were a hundred thousand dollars waiting for each one of you, not one of you would have it if you did not take the trouble to go and get it and appropriate it.

Now, there is stored up in the universe, in nature and in the heart of God, infinite help, infinite bounty; and all that is asked is that you shall take it, accept it, realize it, bring it home, and let it comfort you, and inspire you, and cleanse you, and lift you up. If you do not accept it, if you have not faith to believe that it exists for you, it profits you nothing. It is there; it waits; it longs to be gracious to you; but it requires that you should accept it, that you should take the comfort of it, that you should have a realization of it, that it should be to you the love of God in Christ Jesus, and that it should be in you Christ "the hope of glory."

May God bring you to the preciousness of this hope on earth—to the love of this Jesus; may your faith in him be strengthened day by day; and may he bring you, at last, to that land of glory, where you shall have no need of sign or of teaching—where you shall behold him as he is, and abide with him forever.

PRAYER BEFORE THE SERMON.

Thou beholdest, our Father, the way in which we are walking. Our path is known to thee, and our experience therein. Before thee are the children of joy, and the children of sorrow; the burdened, and those that are light of foot; those that are rich inwardly, and those that are poor; the struggling, and those that are at rest; those that are comforted and satisfied with love, and those who hunger and thirst after it, and are not satisfied. Thou dost behold all the inward struggles, and all the outward embarrassments of this mortal life; and not one is pressing through calm or through storm, through brightness or through darkness, unheeded and unguided. And though to us, by reason of our weakness and our littleness, life seems a whirl in which things dash upon each other wildly, and without guide, and where chance is but little overborne by human intelligence; yet, to thine eye, all things are under law, and all things are bidden, and thy counsels are supreme, and thy sovereign will everywhere still holds everything in subordination; and in the end we shall behold it. We, who are now pilgrims, shall yet one day be content in our Father's realm. We, who are dark-minded, shall yet one day see as we are seen, and know as we are known. Out of our experience we look away by faith to thee. We desire to live, not by sight, but by faith. What time we look upon things as they are, our hearts grow heavy and our eyes grow dark. Only when we can lift ourselves up above things that we behold into the eternal realm of truths which thou hast made known, and which thou art making known through us, can we find a settled peace. There is a realm in our thought where no wants do follow. There are experiences which are full of blessedness without change. And although we do not rise easily, sometimes we rise to the plentitude of trust, and then get strength enough to last us through the dreary days that follow. Not often dost thou take thy disciples to the mountain-top to be transfigured before them; yet sometimes thou dost; and afterward, when weary months have rolled away, still thou dost stand before them brighter than the sun lifted above the earth, hovering with its power bright in the air, more blessed than in any earthly contact. And we rejoice that thou dost manifest thyself to thy people. We do not hear thee speaking as we hear one another speak, though we long for it ever so much. We do not feel our hand touched by thine, though we desire to clasp thy hand in inseparable friendship and guidance. We do not live with thee as we live one with another; for thou art a Spirit, and we are mortal bodies, and are living in a different sphere from thine. We cannot know these higher things as we know the lower. If we know them at all, we know them by the way and by reason of the highest things; and yet we do know them. Thou dost interpret thyself to our love, to our faith, to our hope, to our sense of that which is right and beautiful. Thou art not far from us. Even when we seem furthest from thee, thou art nearest to us. The sun hath not gone because the room is dark. It shineth still all around about, though it may be shut out. And thou art not far from us because we shut thee out. We rejoice that there is a life hidden in thine. We rejoice to believe that thy life abides in ours. Thou dost come to thy people. Thou dost dwell with them. Thou dost, in the sweetest familiarity, dwell with them, sup with them, converse with them, sympathize with them, joy and rejoice with them, lift them up when they fall down, pity them when they are in trouble, forgive them when they trespass, and inspire them when they are by despondency rendered dull. Thou art all in all: not in those alone who are high—the children of genius.

Thou art all in the poor, and in the needy; in children, and in men grown. Thou art all in *all*. Thou completest the circle of being in thyself. And we rejoice in this fullness and blessedness of thy being, in all our relations to thee, and in all thy sympathetic relations to us; and we desire more and more to learn, in a practical life, in a daily experience, to live by trust, by hope, by communion, by joy in the Holy Ghost.

Grant to all those who desire this life the quickening and the love of thy Spirit. We are weak. It is not by the ordinary exertion of our own will, it it not by our own skill nor our own learning, that we reach unto these things. Thou must take us up still. Who of us can make the day fair? Who of us can bid the morning shine and drive away the storms? These come from out of the heavens. And thou from out of the higher heaven must let down for us those blessed visions, and that strength, and that comfort, and all that food of the soul which we need.

We beseech of thee that we may have, to-day, the consciousness that we are beloved of thee. May we put far from us those evil thoughts which spring from human experiences. Thou art a Father, but how infinitely, and in a sense how much fuller than any earthly parent! How minute, how watchful, how tender, how patient, how long-suffering is thy care of us! Thy thoughts have to do with everything that belongs to us. Thou art moving around about us with more influence than the light is around about everything on which it shines. May we lift ourselves into a comprehension of this. May we trust in thy love. Though we understand thee not; though thy ways are strange to us; though thy dealings seem adverse; though thou hidest thyself, and dost seem to frown upon us through darkness, and chastise us with many stripes and strokes—though thou slay us, we will trust thee. There is supreme goodness over all evil. There is absolute wisdom over all the folly which mixes in human life. There is glory over all human failure and disgrace. There is a rest which remaineth for the people of God And through storms, through troubles, through temptations, through darkness, through doubts, through all evil suggestions, we lift ourselves up to thee, the obscured and the necessary God. Thou art needful to our life. Thou *art*, because we need thee. And we believe that all those aspirations and yearnings which we have toward thee, spring not from the ground. What clod hath taught us to desire God? From what side of human life have we learned the glory of the disinterested love which is supereminent in thee? It is thy drawing that hath taught us these better things. And we cling to the inspiration and the aspiration, and desire to be lifted upward and onward to the end, that we may inherit the promises, and at last behold thee as thou art. No more dreams; no more thoughts of dismay and despair; no more images nor analogies; no more wild reasonings: we shall behold thee as thou *art*, in thy glory, in thy symmetry, in thine ineffable beauty, in thine all-powerful drawings of love,—*as thou art*, never to doubt again, nor to wander; not to drop a tear, but to be forever with the Lord.

Grant, out of the great abundance of the counsels of these truths, that those may be comforted to-day who need thy special presence,—all that are bereaved; all that have walked the ways of sadness and sorrow under the chastisements of thy gracious hand; all that are under bitter disappointments; all that find themselves cast down by any reason. Give strength to the weak. Give comfort to the afflicted. Give hope to the doubting and discouraged. Give thine own presence to those who are in darkness. May every one of us feel, to-day, that we have fed upon the Lord. May we feel that he has been to us the bread of life. May thy communion be as the water of life to every thirsty soul.

We pray for those, to-day, who shall be gathered together in our

churches. May they meet their Lord. And may thy dear servants that shall attempt to expound the truth to them be able to do it by the help of the Holy Ghost, sent down from on high. We pray that they may spread the Gospel, and make its work more perfect in our land. May its tidings be carried to every land, and may the earth speedily see thy salvation.

We ask these things in the name of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. *Amen.*

PRAYER AFTER THE SERMON.

Grant, our Father, thy blessing to rest abundantly in the word spoken—especially in the preciousness of the truth as it is in Jesus Christ. Grant that every one of us may lay claim to that which is ours. Not only may we all be able to say, Our Father, but may each of us be able to say *My* Father. With him of old, may we say, *My* Lord and *my* God. God help us to appropriate that which belongs to us and waits for our taking. Grant, we beseech of thee, that the goodness of God may lead us to repentance, and that the mercy, and gentleness, and sweetness of the love of God in Christ Jesus may stir up in us all that is good, all that aspires, and that we may by this divine food in the soul grow to a fuller manhood, to a nobler conception, to a better and purer life, and finally to immortality. We ask it for Christ's sake. *Amen.*

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